

**Mapping the Movida:
Re-Imagining Counterculture in Late 20th-Century Spain**
(presentation slides follow)

What is the relationship between space, class, gender, and representation? How do uncharted cultural spaces conceal underrepresented artists and social groups? How does charting “new” spaces and artists fit into, question, and reinforce the Movida’s spatial canon? Finally, how might DH methods—specifically geospatial methods—intervene in such histories? These are some of the questions that drive my ongoing research project, “Mapping the Movida,” an open web archive and geo-spatial project that visualizes cultural and creative hubs and networks of the Movida, a social phenomenon and cultural renaissance—as many of you here today know—that emerged in the first decade of Spanish democracy (roughly 1976-1986). By examining and comparing event listings and advertisements in hegemonic and subcultural publications from the 1970s and 1980s, “Mapping the Movida” brings to light uncharted human and cultural geographies of recent Spanish history. Today, I will discuss the development of this project and examine how, with the support of digital tools and methods, it challenges the spatial and therefore cultural canon of what is widely understood as the *Movida madrileña*.

Inspired by David Shepard, Todd Presner, and Yoh Kawano’s *Hypercities* project [SLIDE], which “maps the historical layers of city spaces in an interactive, hypermedia environment” (<http://www.toddpresner.com/?p=187>), “Mapping the Movida” emerged in response to a simple question: *What did the Madrid of the Movida look like?* Over the last 35-40 years, the Movida has become one of the most theorized, debated, and historicized cultural phenomena of recent Spanish history. Many scholarly studies and mainstream media associate the culture of the Movida with renowned figures such as [SLIDE] filmmakers Pedro Almodóvar and Iván Zulueta, photographers Alberto García-Alix and Pablo Pérez-Mínguez, visual artists Ouka Leele and Ceesepe, and punk-turned-pop musician Alaska (or, Olvido Gara). These artists

have not only been the subject of extensive scholarly analysis—my own included—they have received numerous State subsidies over the last forty years in the form of public grants and awards public television and radio airtime, and dedicated gallery or museum space to commemorate their work, revealing an overlap in scholarly and State interests in studying, supporting, and giving visibility to the same artists. With the exception of Pedro Almodóvar, one of the most striking characteristics of those who have been historicized and made visible as so-called “artists of the Movida” is that they are upper middle-class. They are also primarily men.

By the same token, when examining the canonized geographies of the Movida and the widely documented cultural hubs and spatial networks of the period, we find that they are primarily centered around Madrid’s core neighborhoods, such as the central Malasaña, and, in some cases, affluent north-central neighborhoods, including a commercial district known as AZCA. The list of celebrated Movida sites located in the city center—including Rock-Ola, El Penta, and La Vía Láctea—have been consistently cited in studies about the period (Nichols and Song 2013; Nichols 2009; Lechado 2005; Labrador Méndez 2009; Smith 2000). However, locales such as the bar and music venue Sala Imperio [SLIDE] in the working-class neighborhood of Carabanchel—both of which have been cited in subcultural publications such as the early issues of *La Luna de Madrid*, DIY events flyers from the period, and personal blogs in the digital era—have not, to my knowledge, been referenced in peer-review studies and major national press outlets.

Upon comparing and inspecting the list of cultural sites—venues, galleries, museums, nightclubs, restaurants, bars, and so forth—and list of artists that have been historically included in the Movida canon by mainstream and scholarly sources, two important matters became evident: first, that canonized cartographies and cultural histories of and about the Movida have overwhelmingly neglected to map and therefore study peripheral neighborhoods and venues, and

working glass artists, leaving behind an intellectual and historical blind spot in contemporary Spanish cultural studies. Second, that these often-cited canonical artists, spaces, and cultural products are mutually referential—what Michel Foucault would describe as “semi-closed sites” (Foucault 1986) of culture, history, and criticism. These are sites that metaphorically enclose rather than connect with the outside world and external or unfamiliar elements.

To illustrate exactly what I mean by this (semi-closed sites), let’s have a look at the following three slides, taken from my Mapping the Movida project: **SLIDE 1)** Above is a screenshot of a geospatial visualization produced by geographical data mined from scholarship on the Movida found via JSTOR, which brands itself as a digital collection of “CORE” journals in the humanities, social sciences, sciences, and mathematics, and dialnet, which includes scholarly articles published in Spanish. What are considered to be the pivotal “locations of the Movida,” according to a total of 185 Movida scholarly pieces included in these database (88 in JSTOR, 97 on Dialnet), can be reduced to a mere few points on the map of Madrid—10 to be exact. **SLIDE 2)** Slightly more extensive than the first, this second visualization is grounded in data mined from *El País* and includes an additional 3 points for a total of 13 cultural sites. I collected this data from El País’s ‘hemeroteca digital’ to mine articles that included the keywords “movida” and “movida madrileña” and then scraped relevant articles (manually and using the digital tool Scrapy) for addresses and geo references that I input into a spreadsheet and uploaded into free and open web geospatial visual software (Carto, ESRI StoryMaps) to produce visualizations such as these.

[SLIDE] Essentially, these were the locations where the Movida’s most well-known artists had been showcased. El Pentagrama, Rock-Ola, Casa Costus, Galería Moriarty, Sala Morocco: five widely-known points of interest in the so-called “Madrid of the Movida.” Pedro Almodóvar, Ouka Leele, Alberto García-Alix, Pedro Almodóvar, Iván Zulueta, Alaska: a sample

of five recurring names in what might be referred to as the “Movida canon.” There is a correlation between these canonical artists and these canonical spaces in that the latter were frequented by the former and, as such, by studying one we are inevitably led to the other—studying Almodóvar leads to us Rock-Ola, Pentagrama, Sala Morocco; studying García-Alix takes us to Galería Moriarty, Casa Costus, and vice versa. As such, they close onto one another, operating as “semi-closed” and mutually denotive cultural generators. In other words, underlying how the Movida has been canonized, and which particular Movida artists have been canonized along with it, is space. So, the question arises, what more is there to the Movida than what we see here?

To answer this, began examine [SLIDE] Madrid-based events listings and advertisements, and geographical references in independent subcultural publications such as *La Luna de Madrid* and *Rockocó* and state-supported yet niche publications *Madrid me Mata* and *Madriz*. This visualization will give you a sense of the radical difference in representation of the Madrid of the Movida between these publications and that of *EL País* and scholarship. [SLIDE] The list of sites grew twenty-fold and, similarly, the list of affiliated artists grew eight-fold, revealing a schism between the cultural history and spatial canon of the Movida generated by scholarship (centrally located, upper middle class, homonormative) and those generated by subcultural publications: [SLIDE] working class and geographically peripheral as well as with more female and economically disadvantaged queer artists.

By collecting and comparing spatial representations of the Movida from different and often competing textual sources, “Mapping the Movida” addresses the mutualistic relationship between canon formation, memory, and space. Digital methods have enabled me to visually digest what I saw as commonplace data about the Movida in new ways. It also revealed the biases and gaps in

my own work as a Hispanist, prompting me to create a project that re-imagined the Movida as geographically, socially, and culturally more inclusive. Thank you **[SLIDE]**

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Digital Hispanisms
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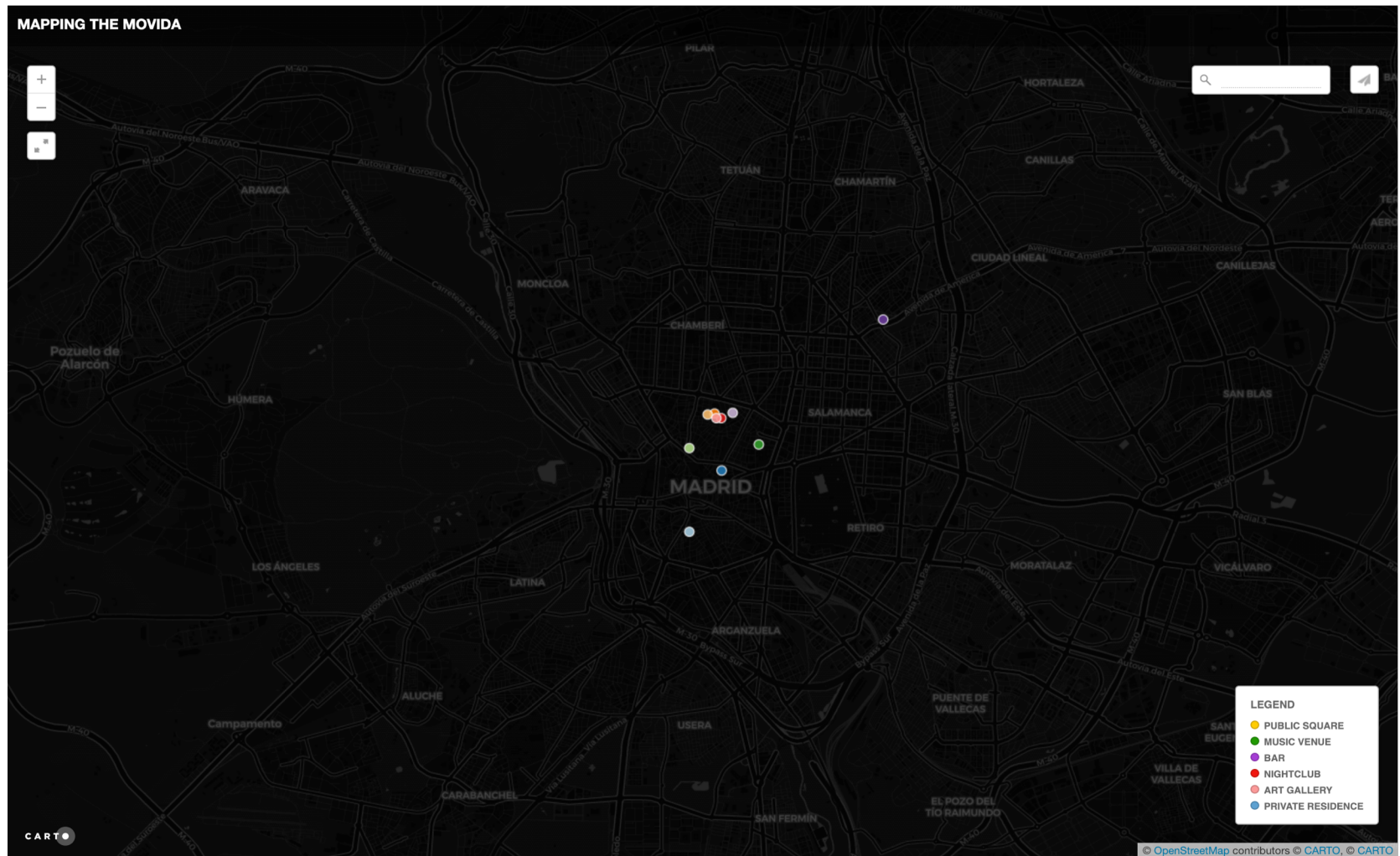
<http://www.hypercities.com/>



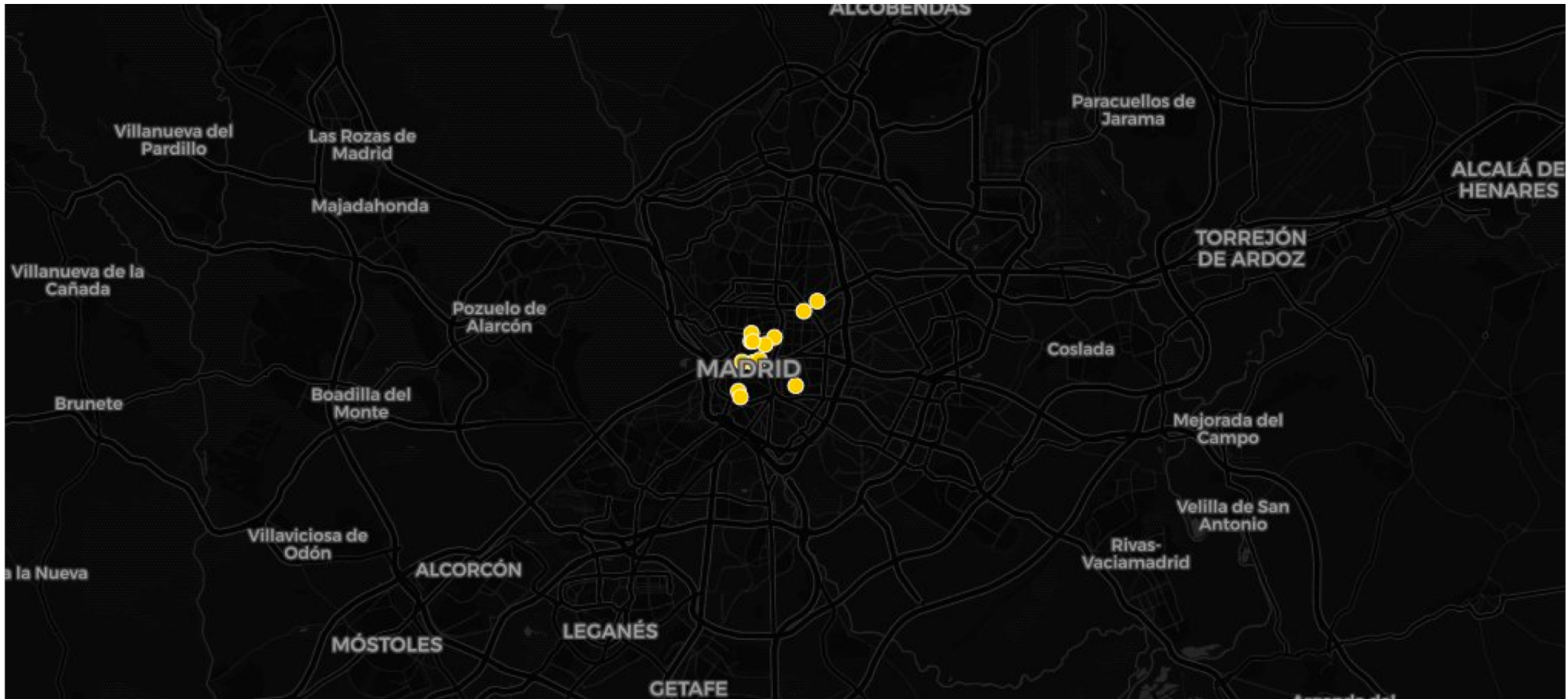
Source: Google Images



Digital image of original event ticket, 1984
Source: personal collection



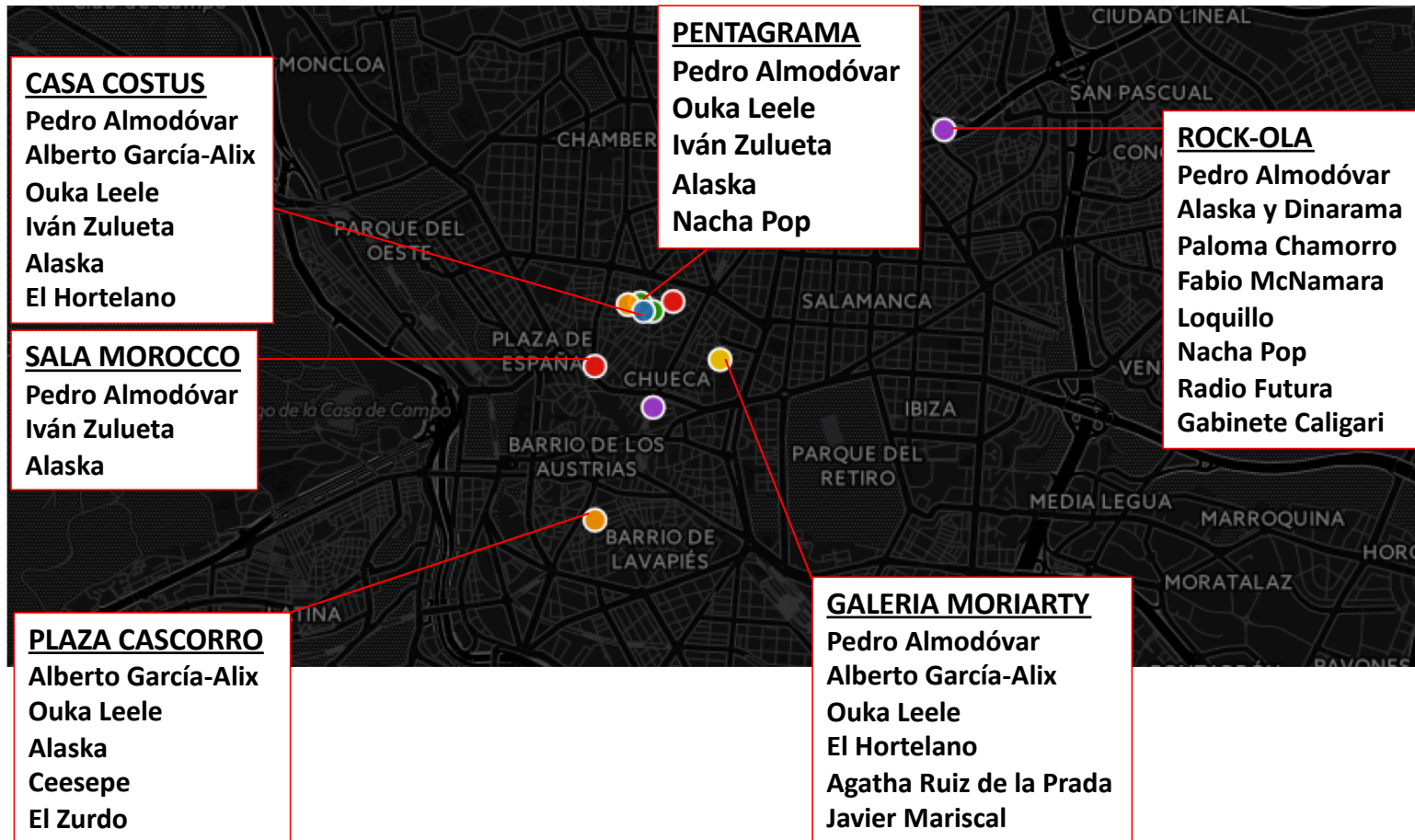
The Madrid of the Movida according to JSTOR and Dialnet
Image source: mappingthemovida.com



The Madrid of the Movida according to *EL País* (online)
Image source: mappingthemovida.com

Mapping the Movida

(Madrid/La Movida c. 1982)





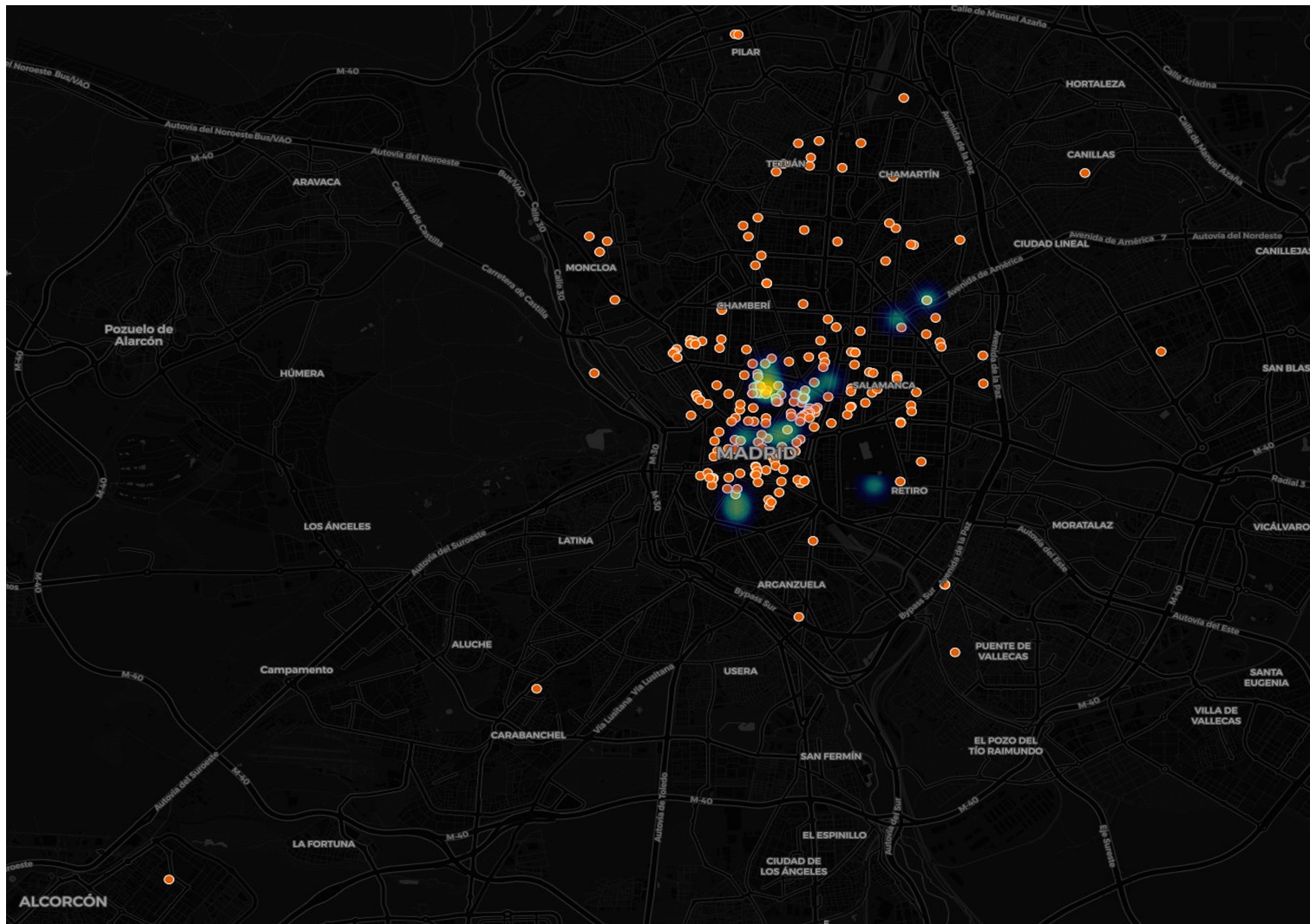
La Luna de Madrid (1982-1988)



Madrid me mata
(1984-1985)



Rockocó
(1980-1985)



The Madrid of the Movidas according to *EL País* (heat map) vs. *La Luna de Madrid* (orange points)
Image source: mappingthemovida.com

Working class and queer artists: Moral Dudosa, Acrobacia Terrestre,
Dee Dee Cubillo, Betty Boops Vallecas

Working-class and geographically peripheral neighborhoods:
Carabanchel, Vallecas, Santo Domingo, Alcorcón

Thank you